

[Schakowsky tears into Cantor for saying Social Security 'cannot exist' in a future America](#)

By Sahil Kapur

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WASHINGTON – Democrats continued to take shots at Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA) days after he made remarks questioning the future of Social Security, as the GOP majority leader insisted his words were over-interpreted.

On a conference call Thursday, Rep. Jan Schakowsky's (D-IL) told reporters that Cantor's remarks were "stunning" and "so completely out of touch" with ordinary Americans.

"Eric Cantor's statement underscores that, now, [Republicans] are willing to turn on seniors by taking away the very bedrock of their financial and health security," Schakowsky said, invoking GOP attempts in 2005 to privatize the Social Security. "Anyone who's paying attention to the policy proposals and actions of the Republican leadership will not be shocked."

Cantor came under fire from Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and other Democrats for saying Tuesday on [NPR](#) <sup>[1]</sup> that, although "we've got to protect today's seniors," "we're going to have to come to grips with the fact that these programs cannot exist if we want America to be what we want America to be."

In a statement to Raw Story, Cantor's spokesman Brad Dayspring shot back at the Illinois Democrat, accusing her of "demagoguery" and arguing that "doing nothing" will "ensure these programs remain on a path to bankruptcy."

"With all due respect, what the Congresswoman is saying is simply untrue – Eric has made clear for months that he is committed to ensuring the long-term viability of these programs by addressing their solvency issues now," Dayspring said. "If the Congresswoman and Democrats wants to hold press events about linguistics or syntax, that's her prerogative."

Yet Schakowsky and other Social Security advocates present on Thursday's call insisted that his remarks reflect what Republicans privately believe.

"It might be some sort of a Freudian slip where Eric Cantor revealed what he really thinks," she said. "I think the slip was that he said it out loud."

The Social Security Trust Fund has a surplus of \$2.6 trillion and is expected to remain solvent in its current form until 2037, according to its 2010 [trustees report](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. But the program's payouts did [exceed revenues](#) <sup>[3]</sup> for the first time last year, sparking a debate in Washington about the future of the seniors safety net.

Americans overwhelmingly oppose cuts to Social Security benefits despite their concerns about deficits, according to [polls](#) <sup>[4]</sup>. Although Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) say cuts are off the table, some top Democrats have endorsed incremental increases to the retirement age, which most Republicans are in favor of.

Here is the response from Cantor's office, which his spokesman requested Raw Story print in full:

*"People are entitled to their own opinions, but not to their own facts. With all due respect, what the Congresswoman is saying is simply untrue – Eric has made clear for months that he is committed to ensuring the long-term viability of these programs by addressing their solvency issues now. What's indisputable is that doing nothing – which seems to be the position of the President, his party's leaders, and Congresswoman Schakowsky – will ensure these programs remain on a path to bankruptcy, resulting in a debt-fueled economic crisis. We should be able to debate different solutions for preserving Social Security and Medicare for future generations based on intellectual honesty not demagoguery and fear campaigns. If the Congresswoman and Democrats wants to hold press events about linguistics or syntax, that's her prerogative, but outside of Washington, Americans want to hear the truth about our fiscal situation and what their elected leaders are doing about it."*